

2008 Southern S&PF Redesign Competitive Process Proposal

Applicant Agency Contact Information

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Project Information

Project Name	Student Intern Assessment SCA Crews				
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Abstract of Project Proposal

The NC Division of Forest Resources proposes to use student conservation association crews for the purpose of facilitating efforts to complete Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), urban forest assessments, forest pest and disease assessments and other valuable forest management and conservation activities in approximately six counties annually. The crews' efforts will in turn help prevent wildfires and improve urban forest health by delivering combined fire prevention, mitigation and holistic urban forest management concepts in areas they have assigned. The majority of North Carolina is no longer rural and can, for the most part, be regarded as urban, urban-interfaced or urban-interfused. Furthermore, the majority of the state, like the rest of the southern region, continues to grow quickly. The south has been identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as one of the fastest growing areas of the country. These crews will support the local urban forest and urban interface program by supporting field personnel and community members with valuable urban forest, insect and disease, and wildfire intelligence. This effort will power geographic areas that have been identified by the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) or Community Wildfire Protection Plans as high risk. This will be accomplished through:

- additional community support through hazard assessments, SWRA, CWPPs, risk assessments, etc.
- conduct additional regional assessments, firewise and urban forestry plans
- community meetings, educational programs, and
- continued and stepped up support for County Rangers working in their respective region areas.

Partnering Agencies and Groups/Organizations	N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, N.C. Department of Insurance, N.C. Fire Marsh Office, N.C. Division of Emergency Management, N.C. Board of Realtors, N.C. Parks and Recreation, County Managers, N.C. Association of County Commissioners, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, N.C. Highway Patrol, N.C. Department of Transportation, N.C. Department of Agriculture, N.C. Home Builders Association, Community Association Institute, U.S. Forest Service-Northern Forests in North Carolina, NFPA, County Commissions
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Project Location	Statewide—concentration in high hazard areas identified in SWRA, CWPPs, and by Urban Forestry Council
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Expected Completion Quarter	Q 2 2008
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Total Federal Funding Request	\$750,000 three years of funding for two crews per year
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Total Proposed Budget including match	Project Income Sources
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	Organization*	Grant	DFR Match	FD & Local Match	Other	Total
	Dollars FY 08	\$750,000				\$750,000
	Donations					
	In Kind Services		\$500,000	\$250,000		\$750,000
	Total	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000		\$1,500,000

Explanation of project

The North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, NCDFR, like any other states, has implemented the Firewise and the Rural & Community Forestry Programs to educate the public, raise awareness of important forestry issues and assist citizens to be proactive with fire and urban management. North Carolina is taking aggressive measures to deal with the threat from homeowners and community leaders to help in these campaigns.

Although North Carolina has taken steps necessary to build a strong, active urban, interface, and intermix program in the state, there is great need to fund this assistance to further the programs of this state. North Carolina has dozens of communities involved in the Firewise and the Tree City USA programs. There are now seven nationally recognized Firewise Communities and 18 Tree City USA communities in North Carolina.

With any at-risk communities and urbanizing areas, the state of North Carolina is in desperate need of expanding this program and taking it to the next level to reduce the staggering impact of wildfire and urbanization through sound land-use planning, creative litigation, supportive community infrastructures and collaborative decision making. Motivating the public to take responsibilities of wildfire risk and urban forestry principles seriously has never been easy, and the problem is only getting worse. The Division of Forest Resources' goal is to eventually get communities in each county of the state on board with the urban and wildfire litigation programs, C-PPs, Firewise, etc. This goal cannot be achieved without additional resources to support these programs.

The purpose of this proposal is to acquire and train temporary staff to assist with data collection that will be used to complete various assessments and aid in resource planning. This project will provide us the opportunity to gather intelligence, and the state will educate and empower communities to motivate North Carolina citizens by bringing the message to the next level.

The Division of Forest Resources is not satisfied with gathering intelligence and monitoring communities that participate in these programs and providing assistance on request. Instead, the Division will utilize these crews to conduct outreach and integrate proper forest management techniques as implemented through wildfire and fire programs. For example, NCDFR is currently working with several communities to establish working forest conservation easements, stewardship plans and urban forestry projects as Firewise is implemented. Throughout the litigation process, these projects also relay information about other forest management issues that may be important, such as forest insect and disease prevention.

This proposal directly addresses fire prevention and protection of homes from wildfire and fires in and around high-risk communities. It is also an opportunity to integrate forest management, urban forestry and forest health into a plan that in turn reduce our wildfire risks. This is a proven, tested project that has generated results so far.

Taking the Program to the Next Level

North Carolina is not only urbanized, urban-interface or urban-intermix. The recent SRA and population growth reports have highlighted that fire hazards, urban forestry, and forest health demands are high to extreme. Providing communities with state-wide professional support is a societal critical to help identify problems and solutions so communities can take action. It will also help NCDFR to further complete community assessments throughout the state to use for urban and fire management plan development.

Hopefully, these crews will change the behavior and habits of many of the people who live in or near woodlands and will make every effort to encourage homeowners and landowners to take the steps necessary to keep their urban forests healthy and make their communities healthier and safer places in which to live. This will be accomplished through.

- fund the crews and support crew operating costs \$25,000 annually to complete assessments and outreach in six counties annually.
- oversight of regional administrative plans, outreach, and community meetings \$5,000 annually
 - advertise events and articles in local newspapers
 - strategic placed media to call attention to the risk caused by poor management
 - continued and stepped up support for Foresters and County Rangers working in these areas.

Evaluation Criteria Discussion:

- Nation and Region Relevance check with the following:
 - ✓ Fragmented Forests
 - ✓ Wildland Fire and Forest Fuel
 - ✓ Changing Markets
 - ✓ Forest Health
 - ✓ Timber Quality and Quantity
- Prioritization
 This project is a high priority for DFR. It is ranked #1 out of the 2 proposals prepared. It is a high priority due to its importance and the impact it will have in assessing the current situation in many areas of the state. This is a proven, tested project that has generated results so far in limited portions of the state, and much still needs to be done. Unfortunately, there are insufficient resources available to handle this task.
- Measuring Success
 While this project will be directed to geographic areas, the project will cross Division district and region boundaries. Exposure of the public to the wildland urban interface, prevention campaigns and practices should also benefit Nation Forests in North Carolina and adjacent counties in South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee. This project proposal can be easily used in the rest of the south and country.
- Coordination
 Planning and implementation of this project will be completed in cooperation with the various sections, districts and regions within the Division, along with coordination with NC State University, League of Municipalities, NC Cooperative Extension Service, fire marshals, fire chiefs, county managers, city managers, and Nation Forest in North Carolina to coordinate messages and projects that are beneficial to all entities.
- Outcomes
 The proposed cost-share funding will directly result in at least 100 communities being made aware of the urban forest health and urban interface changes. Nearly 100 communities will be directly impacted by the grant programs on an annual basis. The benefit of the directed educational campaign should result in at least a 5% increase in the use of proper urban forestry and firewise practices in the targeted areas.
- Technology
 Technology support, including geospatial modeling will be obtained from the North Carolina Center for Geographic Information and Analysis and potentially from the US Forest Service Forest Health Enterprise Team. These will be shared with Division personnel and partners to improve program delivery and to communicate feedback on the ground observations and improvements needed in modeling.
- Integrated Delivery
 The NCDFR Fire Control, Pest Control and Urban Forestry staffs will work closely together to increase cooperation between the programs.
- Leverage
 In-kind services will be provided to support delivery of the program by Communities and other Division and university personnel.
- Influence Positive Change
 Direct benefits will be long-term reduction of wildfire hazard and increase in proper urban forest management on those lands where communities are given sound advice and direct assistance. Changing the culture of management in the urban and urban interface setting from passive management to a more active role to improve the health and productivity is the most important change sought.
- Timeliness
 This project will start within a month or two of notification of funding. On the ground practices listed in outcomes will be documented within the timeframe of this grant project.